

Blueprint Planning in California: Forging Consensus on Metropolitan Development

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Why Study Blueprint Planning?

- Major innovation in regional planning in California
- Emerged independently in largest metropolitan areas from late 1990s
- Now being systematized through state support
 - Blueprint Planning Program
 - Housing bond

Overview

- What is blueprint planning and why did it emerge?
- How is it practiced?
- Has it been effective?

What is Blueprint Planning?

- Consensus-building process to define a preferred scenario for regional development
- Integrates transportation, land use, and environmental planning, regionally and locally
- Relies on
 - Scenario modeling of measurable outcomes
 - Broad-based “visioning” process
- Implemented through incentives
 - Promotes local action with regional benefits

Why Did Blueprint Planning Emerge?

- Growth management was fractured after WWII
 - State: infrastructure and environment
 - Locals: land use
- Conflicts emerged between “pro-growth” and “anti-growth” forces
- Fiscal and environmental constraint require coordinated actions
- Land use and housing policy are key levers
- Blueprints set a framework for coordination

COG/MPOs Are the Vehicle for Blueprint Planning

- Collaborative, consensus-building institutions
- Best connection among land use, transportation, and environmental authority
- Blend *systems* focus (MPOs) with broad *participation* (COGs)
- But no land use control, and redistributing resources a challenge

We Studied Four Major Blueprint Processes

- Association of Bay Area Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission et al.
 - *Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project*
 - *ABAG's policy-based projections (2003)*
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments
 - *Sacramento Region Blueprint (2004)*
- San Diego Association of Governments
 - *Regional Comprehensive Plan (2004)*
- Southern California Association of Governments
 - *Southern California Compass Project/2 Percent Strategy (2004)*

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Blueprint Planning Combines Technical Modeling and Broad Outreach

- **COG/MPO population and land use projections are the focus**
- **Modeling land use alternatives regionally alters the traditional relationship**
- **Interacting land use and transportation requires a broad conversation**
- **Has prompted broad-based, multi-stage “visioning” processes**

Five Stages in Blueprint Planning...

- **Preparation**
 - Build technical and institutional capacity
 - Ensure COG/MPO board commitment
 - Integrate decisionmaking with other stakeholders
- **Visioning**
 - Build a preferred scenario in stages
 - Engage local planners
 - Model regional and local outcomes
 - Face trade-offs

...Stages in Blueprint Planning (continued)

- **Adoption**
 - COG/MPO adopts preferred scenario
- **Implementation**
 - Target priority development areas
 - Develop criteria for prioritizing resources
 - Direct regional resources to priority areas
- **Assessment**
 - An ongoing, iterative process

Preferred Blueprint Scenarios Promise Regional Benefits

- **Preferred scenarios promise reductions in**
 - **Auto share of trips**
 - **VMT**
 - **Land consumed for development**
 - **Carbon dioxide and particulates emissions**
- **Multiple transportation and air quality criteria are modeled**
- **Modeling of other infrastructure and environmental outcomes is less well developed**

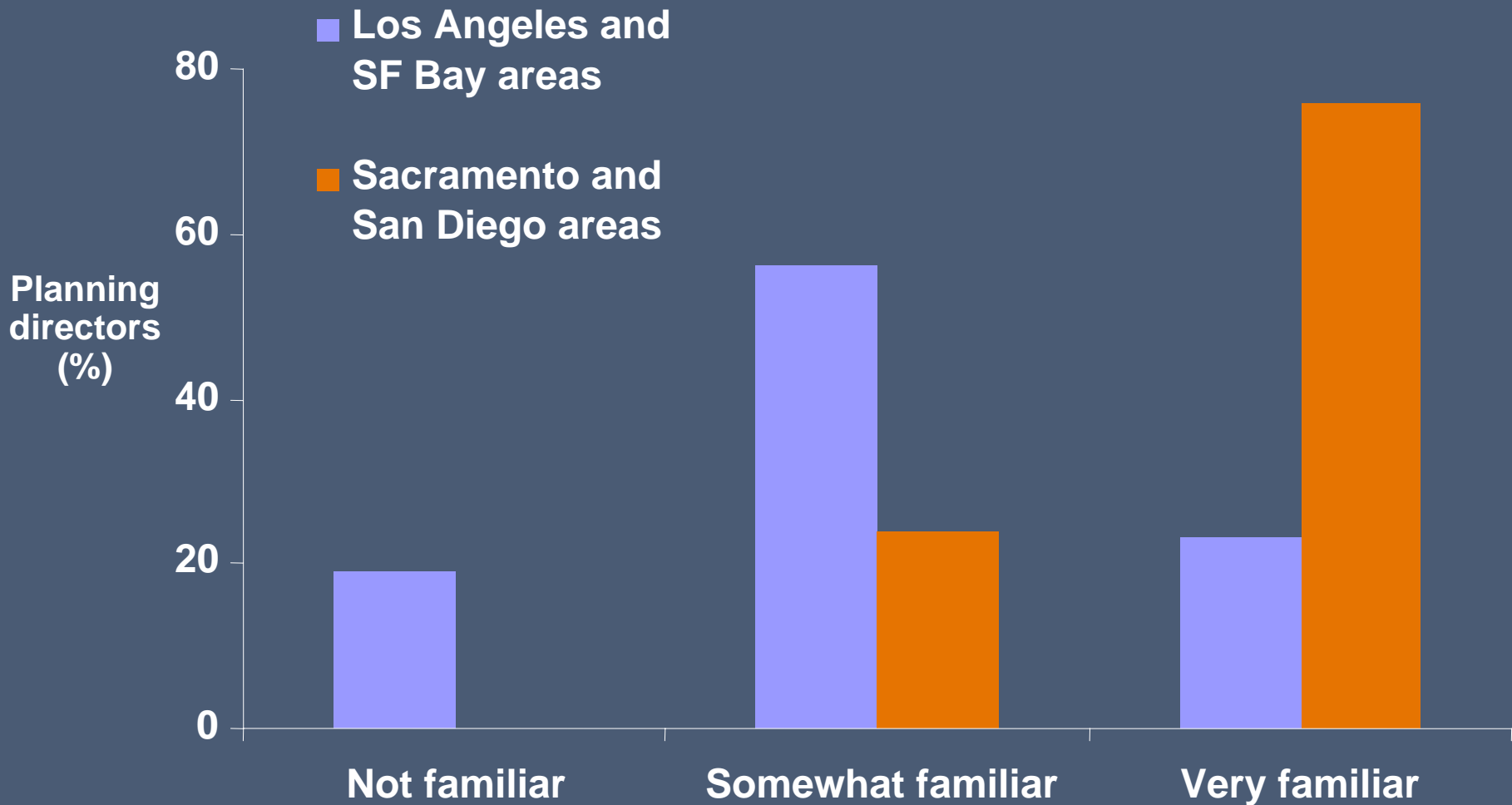
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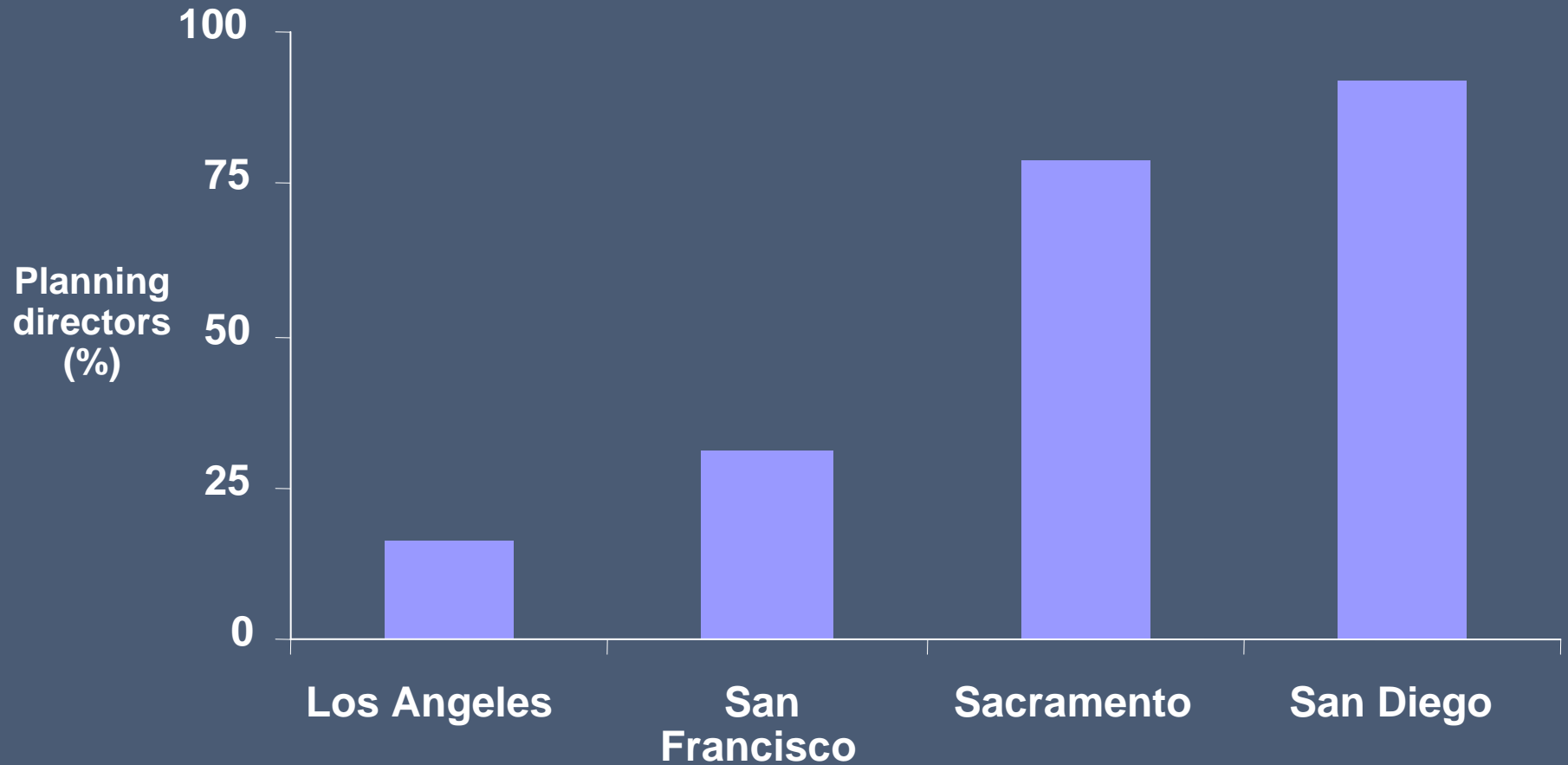
Local Governments Are Participating in Blueprint Implementation

- **Blueprints target more than half (61%) of cities for land use changes, say planning directors**
- **Two thirds (65%) of planning directors in targeted cities consider blueprint objectives compatible with local policies**
- **Two thirds (65%) of targeted cities would need to change general plans and zoning**
- **Half (47%) of planning directors in targeted cities are working on blueprint implementation**

Planners in Larger Regions Less Familiar with Blueprint Processes...



...And Less Engaged in Blueprint Implementation



Blueprint Planning Shows Way Forward...

- We can't yet determine outcomes on the ground
- Changing how people see urban development
- Reinventing growth management
- Fits political reality

...But Substantial Obstacles Remain

- **COG/MPOs have institutional weaknesses**
- **Larger regions face organizational challenges**
- **State support is necessary**
- **Development in greenfield areas has been neglected**
- **Environmental planning lags**

Ingredients of Effective Regional Strategies

- Align and coordinate state, regional, and local incentives, priorities, and plans
- Provide real incentives for local governments to participate
- Develop an ongoing process, not a static vision
 - System focus + broad participation
 - Performance criteria + flexible implementation